



# BUDGET COMMITTEE



Judd Gregg, Ranking Member  
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**Senator Gregg's Remarks at Press Pen & Pad  
On Farm Bill and Budget Vote Delay  
May 22, 2008  
(unofficial transcript)**

I just wanted to answer any questions anybody has about my understanding of what's happening relative to the Ag bill and the budget.

Very obviously, failure to include Title III in the Ag bill that was sent down to the White House was a huge failure on somebody's part. And it's created, obviously, a rather significant procedural snafu. I don't know whether we'll get to a budget vote today, my guess is we won't. I suspect the House won't pass the budget today and we're certainly not going to move forward unless the House moves forward.

The Ag bill remains, in my humble opinion, a serious issue, but it obviously has the votes to go through here. It is not, in my opinion, fiscally responsible, but that doesn't mean it doesn't get 81 votes in the Senate.

There was some discussion as to whether or not the Ag bill, if passed after the Budget Resolution was passed, would generate new points of order against the Ag bill as brought back up. Arguably, you could make the case, however, that it is the discretion of the Chairman of the Budget Committee to set the baseline off of which we would function under that point of order. And as I understand it, Senator Conrad has decided to include the Ag bill in the baseline for the purposes of determining whether or not Pay-Go would apply.

There wouldn't be any new Pay-Go points of order against the Ag bill. It had a long-term point of order which was the ten-year window point of order, \$5 billion. That point of order no longer lies because the effects of the bill have been incorporated in the baseline.

So, if they bring a new bill through here, it would be my understanding that the Chairman would rule that Pay-Go wouldn't apply. And I think he's absolutely right to do that, even though I would disagree with that arguably. But I can't disagree with his right to do that. So that's where we stand. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

*Q: What is it that gives Conrad the right to set the baseline?*

Gregg: The Budget Act. CBO advises, Chairman has the right to set the final rules relative to that baseline within certain parameters, responsibly. In fact, we've had discussions on occasion where you could have stepped outside the reasonable parameters, as both I as Budget Chairman and he has had that opportunity. We've been sort of pushed by our leadership to do that, but he's never done it, I've never done it. I think he's totally within his rights.

*Q: Are you saying effectively that if there's a new Ag bill it wouldn't have any points of order against it that weren't against the previous one under the '07 baseline?*

Gregg: That's my understanding of the situation.

*Q: Do you expect Republicans to oppose doing an override on the bulk of the farm bill and then following with just a Title III vote?*

Gregg: Well, I will oppose overriding the veto and I will oppose Title III. Title III is amendable, if it comes independent of the Farm Bill, of the override.

*Q: So they seem to be preparing to do both?*

Gregg: Yes, there's a two-track procedure going on here.

*Q: Are you saying that, I guess one reason they're doing both is to see what you guys do. So, are you saying that if they were to do Title III as a freestanding, would you amend it?*

Gregg: It would be an amendable vehicle. Now, whether we would offer amendments, I don't know. But it would be an amendable vehicle, subject to all the rights that Senators have on the floor, including the filibuster.

*Q: Have you heard anything that would suggest that would be amended?*

Gregg: No, but I'm looking at the opportunity. I am certainly looking at the opportunity. Well, I think there are other folks here who are waiting to talk to you.